DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 111 773 95 SP 009 463

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TITLE Representative Incidents in the Adoption Process.
INSTITUTION Texas Univ., Austin. Research and Development Center for Teacher Education.
SPONS AGENCY National Inst. of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.; Office of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE 74
CONTRACT NE-C-00-3-0066; OEC-6-10-108
NOTE 33p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.76 HC-$1.95 Plus Postage
DESCRIPTORS *Adoption (Ideas); *Case Studies (Education); Change Agents; Changing Attitudes; Educational Change; Educational Innovation; *Higher Education

ABSTRACT

This paper presents three case studies of innovation, based on interviews with six adoption agents. Key episodes and incidents which illustrate important principles are drawn from the experiences of these adoption agents. The case studies offer examples of both success and failure--by both internal and external adoption agents. They also emphasize the fact that adoption is a long-term process, requiring good communication between the adoption agent and the adopters, and frequent evaluation of progress. (Author)

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REPRESENTATIVE INCIDENTS IN THE ADOPTION PROCESS

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Summer 1974

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REPRESENTATIVE INCIDENTS IN THE ADOPTION PROCESS

Introduction

The student of change and the adoption process in formal organizations faces an extremely difficult assignment when he sets out to "observe" the process of institutional change. His fundamental problem is one of narrowing down the concept of change, which is perhaps the most cosmic principle ever to be thought about, into a small enough unit to be observed and understood. For purposes of this paper, change can be limited to the affects of innovation adoption, which may be set apart as a special kind of change, being deliberate, observable, occurring over a measured period of time, and related to an identifiable product or process that is new to the institution.

An institution may be defined as a structured organization of people functioning together within a set of procedures, values and objectives. Obviously, change in the broadest sense takes place continuously within an institution; however, innovation adoption refers to the alteration of conceptual or operational structure in an institutional setting toward a predefined end. Finally, an institution may undergo such alterations without completing adoption of the innovation. In our work, the adoption process is not complete until the innovation is institutionalized, or incorporated into the established system of institutional functioning.

SPECIAL NOTE: The characters, institutions and stories decribed herein are generated out of a montage of real experiences and likely events. Any resemblances to individuals, living or dead, is purely coincidental.

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Innovation adoption, then, while an observable phenomenon, may occur over a long period of time and may entail countless events and incidents. Indivviduals involved in an adopting institution find it almost impossible to gain an overall perspective of the adoption process while it is occurring. They may be able to see changes in behavior, attitude, procedures, stated objectives and organizational structure, but usually these changes are related to their own view of the trees. Inevitably, the innovation either becomes entrenched, adapted or rejected. To use a biological analogy, the organism will not long endure an alien agent; it incorporates it in some form, or casts it out.

Innovators, then, whether internal or external agents, need rather detailed information over time to evaluate the process of adoption in a given institution.

This paper presents three case studies of the adoption process as it has unfolded in teacher education institutions. It is compiled from interviews with six adoption agents whose notes, tapes and conversations provide incidents and details on the adoption process in a wide variety of settings. Drawing upon their experiences, their successes and failures, the six agents have related incidents which they believe represent important principles at work in vivo. In other words, the adoption agents have told stories which indicate what they believe to be key episodes. A single incident, a meeting, perhaps, during a three-year period might contain clues about the entire adoption process, as in "The Neal Tapes." In "Bill Stone's Memory," an agent reviews an internal incident which foreshadowed the outcome of his efforts long before he knew the outcome himself. "Benton University: Rest in Peace," shows how a seemingly external event influences the outcome of the adoption process.

The people are real, the incidents are factual. Names, dates and places are fictitious.

Following the three case studies, the authors of three related papers[1] have provided their analyses of the incidents as they relate to key variables of the innovation adoption process. Our intention is that the resultant paper will provide new insights to the reader who is attempting to facilitate or study the innovation adoption process.

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[1]G. E. Hall, Phases in the adoption of educational innovations in teacher training institutions (Austin, 1974).

B. A. Manning, The "trouble-shooting" checklist: A manual to aid educational change agents in the prediction of organizational change potential (Austin, 1973).

R. C. Wallace, Each his own man: The role of adoption agents in the implementation of personalized teacher education (Austin, 1974).

The Neal Tapes

May 4, 1973

This is the final of a series of tapes on "The Adoption of Innovations in Institutional Settings." My name is Dr. Michael Neal, and I am a member of a rather harried group of highly specialized people loosely known as "adoption agents." I say harried because, at the present moment, I am flying to a meeting at Central State University, a meeting which I anticipate will be another "ulcer session."

I'm not the nervous type, usually. Nor do I mind flying, although long flights usually throw off my equilibrium for a time. And I ordinarily don't mind attending meetings like the one today, or living in hotels, or eating out all the time, or not getting enough sleep. But when all these things are going on at once inside, I get edgy. I realize you are probably not interested in my ulcer-nerve syndrome nearly so much as my analysis of the change process in institutional settings, but I feel very strongly that the process of adoption cannot be understood apart from the individuals who participate. That is why I insist on stating my experiences somewhat subjectively in order to give you something of the flavor of my professional and personal experiences as an adoption agent; I hope these tapes will be helpful to you in your study.

Let me give some background on this meeting at Central State. In August of 1969, I received a call from the Dean of Education at Central State, Tom Richardson. He'd heard about our PAF (personal assessment feedback) system during a Science Education conference in Sacramento and wanted to know more about it.

Richardson knew a friend of mine from Michigan and had received some sketchy information about our program. The conversation we had was basically

congenial, but didn't yield much information about their situation. Still, we exchanged enough ideas to warrant another call a week later. The Dean had, meanwhile, talked with the department chairman and two or three faculty leaders. They wanted me to make a trip over there to show them what we had.

I took my tool kit (a film on Personalized Teacher Education, a couple of self-paced modules, and the strong conviction that we had something good to offer) and flew over in early September. They had already laid out their program for the 1969 school year but were interested in planning some changes for 1970; they seemed to have the resources to do it.

I was met at the airport on that first visit by Ed Dooley, Chairman of the department, and Sally Swift, Director of Elementary Education. *Ed and Sally will both attend the meeting today. Ed will have his usual concerns about running a smooth department: "never take an outright stand, always support the status quo, don't rock the boat." Sally will be her usual warm and gracious self, facilitating the delicate process of interaction. Over the last two years, more than any other individual, she has been responsible for bringing change to teacher education at Central.*

The Chairman was genial but formal as he introduced me. I tried to determine the mood of the group. I had the feeling that Dooley didn't share the Dean's enthusiasm or knowledge about our program; he explained my presence there as something like a "public relations" presentation for modern techniques in teacher education, leaving the impression that nothing more than entertainment was to be expected from the meeting. After being introduced, I re-oriented them on my purpose.

I had experienced this before; often those in positions of authority in an institution feel the necessity of exposing their people to "new ideas,"

and yet maintain only a superficial interest. This gives them an aura of modernism and flexibility while in reality, they continue along the same procedural and philosophical lines as before. I decided on the spot to give them a few "zingers."

I began by saying that the Dean had first expressed interest (a fact that Dooley hadn't mentioned to the group) in our program. I made it clear that my institution was less interested in public relations than in seeing a successful personalized approach to teacher education tested and exported as widely as possible. As Dooley became less comfortable, the others in the group gained interest. The meeting developed into a brainstorming session that threatened to preempt the formal presentation. Earl Kennedy, one of the younger faculty, was fascinated with the Personal Assessment System, and Ruth Jones demanded more information about the developmental sequence of teacher concerns. Even when Chairman Dooley stiffly excused himself to attend another meeting, the pace did not slacken.

I finally showed the film in the afternoon. It put together for them the bits and pieces we had been discussing. Earl begged for some kind of follow-up.

"Mike, you're not just going back home and leaving us at this point, are you? I mean, we really want this stuff, and we've just barely had a glimpse of it. What happens next?"

What happened next was not a part of the formal agenda, but was nevertheless a very important step in the adoption process. The interested parties decided to go have a beer and talk the situation over. I made arrangements to catch a later plane home, then went across the street to a campus pub with Sally, Earl Kennedy, Ruth Jones and George Simpson, one of the counseling interns in their doctoral program.

I said, "Earl, don't forget that, even if you do commit to this, you have a year's preparation ahead of you; you not only have to sell this to the other faculty members and have it authorized by the institution, you also have months of planning and building before you can actually begin."

"Look, Mike," he said, "I've spent years preparing already. I beat my brains out in graduate school; I've earned my stripes in this place; and I'm tired of waiting for some stuffed shirt to decide we are ready to do good things in education. I think we shouldn't wait until next year. We should try to install some of these things right now, get it going. George, Ruth, what do you think?"

Even though the members of that small group couldn't agree on strategy, and had different levels of interest and concern, they became the nucleus of a forceful group within the institution. That evening over beer (which lasted until two in the morning) turned out to be more important than the day's formal presentation. Out of it evolved strategies for developing an inter-institutional system of mutual support. After long discussions on the subject, Earl consented to come to us for training in use of the counseling feedback system. He decided to come in October for a three-day workshop, bringing three other counselor-types with him.

Meanwhile, Sally Swift, in her calm, rational way, worked on the Chairman and brought him around to commitment.

The year rocked along. Sally and Earl became my contacts. We exchanged phone calls and correspondence. Sally decided to come to the Center for a day in November to meet the developers and to see if she could gain a more in-depth understanding of the conceptual base of the program; Earl continually pushed for the entire "package" to be sent to them so they could begin. I

held him off, gradually feeding them pieces of the system, but only after he had demonstrated understanding of the process.

Looking back on that first year, I suppose the hardest part of it from my viewpoint was convincing them that the program was an extremely complex thing; I urged over and over on them the idea that installing and operating the PTE system was a developmental process. It never seemed to occur to them that they could not crate up the system and import it, read the instructions, put it together, and operate it.

Hard reality came in the spring of 1970. Earl and Sally had returned to Central State with different orientations but equal amounts of zeal. Earl had his counselors working with personalized feedback and some of the curriculum people were trying out the modules. Beginning small scale operations a half a year early, they were finding difficulty in seeing the system.

Earl called in early February, 1971:

"Mike, something's screwed up. I have the counselors working okay, and we all like the stuff we're doing. The students are really excited about the PAF sessions, and it looks like a go-ahead on videotaping for next fall. But it looks to me as if we're the only ones doing anything on the program. The curriculum guys over there seem to be going on as they always have, never aware we have a new approach. Man, we have the same kids going through our stuff that they have, and they can't seem to find any continuity between the departments. What can we do?"

I suggested a meeting between his people and the C&I people and pointed out that in their efforts to establish faculty teaming, they might coordinate their efforts.

"After all," I said, "the idea is to exchange information with each other in a way that is beneficial to the students."

He was a bit more cynical. He said I sounded like I was reading from a manual. "Look, we're in reality down here. I never dreamed it would be so hard to coordinate things. I think you'd better come down and straighten us out."

"What does Sally think about it?"

"Hell, I don't know what Sally thinks. I just know what I think. You need to come help us out."

So, a meeting was scheduled and I went. We had a meeting which included curriculum people and counselors. They were all surprised that they shared common goals regarding the PTE system, but they were even more surprised to find that they had never actually met together to talk. Dooley came to the meeting and read off a couple of "I told you so's" and the sparring groups immediately united to confront his attitude. After two hours of getting out concerns and a few hostilities, they settled in to talk to each other. By the end of the day, they saw that they didn't actually need me; they had found strength of their own resources. However, they did make me promise to be on call in case they needed help. I made a note to send them some more materials, and they selected several faculty members to make another trip to the Center for further training.

In the fall, they started up their "PEP" (Personalized Education Program). They had one experimental faculty team, working with about twenty students. These students experienced PAF under the guidance of Earl Kennedy and George Simpson. Earl was satisfied, but Sally wasn't. She expressed concern during one of my visits that all the things going on were not coordinated. "It's just a bunch of isolated activities." she said. "There seems to be no connection between any of the components, particularly from the student's view-

point. It's just like the old program as far as they are concerned except for the counseling."

I explained (again) that the installation of any innovation was a long, painful developmental process, and that, while each part of the system might be used, no visible benefits would come until the various parts worked smoothly together.

"I understand that, but we've been working with you for over a year now, and we've had our PEP program in operation for months. Some of the faculty are getting tired. The new has worn off. It's not that we don't believe in the principles of personalized education; we do. But we're having a rough time seeing the payoff for all the work. It is as if the system is wonderful on paper, but, in reality, it is not possible to make it all work. One big advantage we can see is that, now, the faculty and staff are working closely together for the first time."

They had made fantastic progress. "Look where you were one year ago. Just talking about doing something different than just having self-contained courses, and now you are well on the way.

"But the point is this: you're too closely involved with the program to see it from my perspective. You have made great strides in improving your operation. Look, even Dooley is coming around. He told me yesterday he never would have believed the amount of sheer effort being put forth by your group, for no apparent reward except better education for your kids."

She smiled a tired smile. "That's worth a lot."

"And don't forget, some institutions take four or five years to get where you are now. Not everybody is a Sally Swift or an Earl Kennedy. I think it's time to review your progress and find out where you are. Maybe you

could get all the people together again in a month or two and go over strategies for your second year; weed out difficulties, plan changes so that the program suits your needs more. I think your next step is to integrate the components of the program and try and further dissolve course distinctions, and to expand the experimental PEP so that it becomes the teacher education program. Let me warn you, though, it will mean more hard work. It will mean meetings, planning, and individual work. It will mean blocking out courses and curriculum, integrating the work of the counselors with the instructors and the module people, tying it all together. I guess what you really need at this point is some leadership that comes from outside any one area of interest. Get what I mean?"

She looked at me for a long moment with a puzzled expression. At last, she grinned broadly and said, "Dooley!"

They had been working around Dr. Dooley, using pressure, at times even being coercive, in order to get the job done. Under Sally's leadership, they began to use a different tactic. Using the principles of personal concerns, they began to talk with Dr. Dooley from the viewpoint of his concerns rather than their own. Sally and Earl finally began to understand that his concern for a smoothly functioning department was a legitimate one; if those concerns were addressed and resolved, he would be the ideal man to carry off integration of the PEP with institutional support.

During that year and most of the next, I was increasingly involved in our own operation at home and with other collaborating institutions. We did keep in touch, but now Central State was off and running. The program didn't look exactly like I had hoped it would, but I had long since learned that no program, no matter how excellent in conception or development, would look the same in

any two institutions. Sally succeeded in getting full commitment from Ed Dooley, although he exhibited little of the zip and vitality of an Earl Kennedy. Almost mechanically, they plodded through the tasks necessary to get the program institutionalized. Where Kennedy's explosiveness had generated action, Dooley's meticulous, sometimes frustrating attention to details carried the action out. It was as if the program had shifted gears, or even vehicles. Before, it was a drag race with screeching tires and high speeds. Now, things felt more like a sedate drive in the country. But they were still moving.

The last visit I made with them was in March of this year. There was no real crisis, but we needed a routine contact to see how things were going. All the now familiar faces were at the meeting: Dooley, Swift, Kennedy, Simpson (now Dr. Simpson), Jones, and numerous others.

Ed chaired the meeting and brought us up to date. I couldn't miss the difference between this and that meeting three years ago. The people were more relaxed, assured, and seemed to know one another better. This, for me, was the payoff, if nothing else ever happened. I wasn't really needed anymore, and it felt good. Toward the end of the meeting, Earl Kennedy seemed unable to contain his secret any longer and requested our attention for an "announcement."

"I want to bring up for your consideration the most fantastic thing to come along in education since textbooks. I'm going to recommend that we install it along with PEP. It's called SOC." He looked as if he had just climbed Mt. Everest.

"What the hell is Sock?" I asked.

Earl and Ruth Jones exchanged significant glances. "Tell 'em, Ruth," he said.

"Student Organized Curriculum," she said, exhibiting the brochure. "It was developed by students and faculty at Valley University. It really is the most exciting thing we've seen in a long time. Earl and I have looked it over, and we think we can do it here."

As they were talking, the others began to be caught up in their enthusiasm. I looked at Ed Dooley and smiled. He looked back at me with an ancient expression of fatigue. He shook his head slowly, and unheard except by me, said softly, "Oh my god, here we go again."

Epilogue

I don't know if the experiences I have related here will shed light on adoptions of innovations in a way that will be useful to students of change. I do know, however, that this case represents a very "normal" kind of abnormal experience from an adoption agent's perspective. The meeting I will attend today (and the plane is about to land now) marks the end of our formal linkage relationship between institutions, for the simple reason that the linkage is no longer needed. They have arrived at sophisticated usage of the innovation; they have integrated or institutionalized the innovation; they have matured to the point of "renewal" (witness Earl's new innovation); they have adopted.

I have to put this thing away and fasten my seat belt....

Bill Stone's Memory

Bill Stone became Chairman of the Department of Education, Elmstown College, in 1968. His major task, according to the Dean, would be to revamp the College of Education and establish some form of "competency-based" teacher education program.

Dr. Stone is a mild, polite man who seems to take himself and his professional life seriously. In the following narrative, he relates from memory several incidents which took place over a four-year period, 1968 to 1972. (Ed.)

I first visited Elmstown in early August of 1968. I met with Dean Jones on Monday; then, he asked me to stay on for a few days to see the school and meet some of my future colleagues.

On Tuesday, I met with Jones again. I was pretty sure to take the position already, but I felt the need to sort some pros and cons. Aside from the professional considerations, I had my family to consider. How would they take a move just now? May might not want to give up a well-earned position of leadership among faculty wives. The boys would finish high school within three years. Would we want to give up all our friends and associations?

Jones and I had lunch with Dr. Tom Jarrell, a man who seemed to wield much influence in the Department. He had been there a long time and gave the impression that he represented a powerful group in the faculty. Jarrell took me on a tour of the school after Jones had gone back to his office for a meeting. I'll never forget our conversation as we walked across the beautiful campus:

"What are you thinking, Bill?"

"I'm just admiring the beauty of the place. It's really so different from what I'm accustomed to."

"I'm glad you like it," he said. "Will all this help persuade you to come here with us?"

I felt he was prying a little but didn't mind. I actually needed to discuss the possible move with somebody to sort things out in my mind.

"Yes, I think so. I mean, the environment is so important to our lives these days. This would have to have a good effect on me and my family."

Jarrell walked along in silence for a moment, then said, "Bill, let's get down to the nitty gritty, ok?" He looked at me and then went on without an answer.

"I'm sort of the spokesman for a group of faculty members who are concerned with the welfare of the Department. We know the Dean's private feelings about the Department, and frankly, we have to fight for our very survival."

"I don't understand," I said. I wasn't sure I wanted to get into this with a man I had only met an hour ago.

"Well, there's a strong minority of us, nearly half the faculty, who feel the Department doesn't have enough autonomy. It boils down to a question of academic freedom, at least in an administrative sense."

"I don't see why you're telling me all of this," I said. I was losing patience with the situation. It is not that I am insensitive to important political problems in the academic world, nor am I uninterested in the structure of the College. It is just that Jarrell seemed to be intentionally involving me in something, something I had no information on.

"Our group feels that your coming here is very, very important. So important that we felt we needed to know something about where you would stand before you came. Don't get me wrong; we can't really influence the Dean pro or con on your appointment (did I detect a resentment here?), nor do we wish to.

In fact, we are very pleased at the possibility. You come highly recommended." He smiled and touched my elbow reassuringly, but became serious again and went on quickly. "But we have felt an acute lack of input into decisions which affect us all. We see your appointment as a--a fresh start, a chance to initiate a more democratic approach to the administration of the School of Education. Through your leadership, of course."

"I appreciate your concern, Dr. Jarrell. But let me assure you that is the approach I would take in any case. You say you represent a minority, and although you point out it is a large one, that leaves something over fifty per cent of the faculty members whose opinions I haven't had the opportunity to hear, and I assume their opinions would be somewhat different from yours on specific issues."

"True. But percentages are misleading. In this case, our group actually represents a controlling consensus in the Department, since there are some neutral members who go with us on important issues, giving us a majority when it counts.

"So, you can see that we aren't negotiating from a position of weakness."

Neutral? Negotiate? These terms convinced me that I had sensed right about the nature of the group Jarrell represented. I wanted to get the conversation over and be alone for a while.

"I must ask again, Dr. Jarrell, what has all this to do with me at this particular moment? If you have control of the Department, why are you approaching me for assistance, even before I have been officially appointed?"

"That's just it. It has everything to do with you, for this reason: Even with a consensus on major decisions, the Dean overrides us. He controls the Department, even though he hasn't the foggiest notion of what is going on.

Here's the point. He has great confidence in you and hopes to place upon you the responsibility for running the Department."

"I would hope so," I murmured.

"But if we can rely on you to support us, it would benefit everybody. As I said, we don't speak from a position of weakness. You would find us a very strong force in your corner. For example, you mentioned your family. Does your wife work?"

I was surprised at this new tack. "She did before; She has a Master's in ed. admin., but what's--?"

"We could make sure she finds some very fulfilling employment. The feeling we have, and we've talked about it, is that we should all try to help each other every way we can. Do you understand what I mean?"

"I feel sure I understand what you mean. Do you mind if we go now? You've told me many things, and I have a lot to think about. If it's alright with you, I'll just walk back to my room. Thanks for the tour."

"Of course," he said, reaching to shake hands. "We'll be looking forward to working with you. Good-bye."

I didn't let the incident keep me from taking the appointment. I took the position because it offered me the chance I had been looking for to build an innovative teacher education program. I had been rocking along at my previous position, tenured faculty, secure and so forth, for too long. I needed a change and a challenge.

Also, the Dean was promising me that we could completely restructure the School of Education if I wanted to. He believed the time was perfect for me to come to Elmstown. He was committed to putting in some form of competency-based teacher ed. At the same time, he believed the faculty to be less than competent, particularly regarding productive change.

We had a few problems due to the efforts of the Nasty Nine, as I came to call Jarrell's clique. But, looking back on those years, years of intense concern and effort for me and several other people, I think the biggest hindrance to adoption was the organizational structure of the Department and its relationship to the college administration. For example, the appointment of a director of elementary ed, ostensibly a straightforward act, called for a dual rather than a single appointment for political reasons. So, we had "co-directors" for el ed; this kind of complication is representative of the entire situation. I was walking into a terrible situation and didn't know it. The older faculty, and there were many of them, were tradition bound. Most of them had lived in the valley a long time. They owned the place, and most were threatened both by my appointment and by the changes I wanted to bring. They never saw me as one of them; I was irrevocably linked with the Dean in their minds. Therefore, what should have been a cooperative effort to build a program became a struggle between two forces.

I try, in retrospect, to see the thing philosophically. I guess the central conflict in such cases is the interplay between individuals, institutional policies, and interpretations of these. I respect the rules of institutions and would not presume to thwart their intent. But, I do not see individuals as subservient to institutions; instead, I believe institutions should serve the people who make them work and, even more important, those for whom the organizations exist. But, if the very workings of the institution, in this case a college, deny their fullest potential, then steps have to be taken to correct the system. Such steps must not be unilaterally taken by single individuals, no matter what their office. If all involved in an effort desire a positive outcome, their roles become tools instead of weapons.

But, at the time all this was happening, I was confused about my own role. I was placed in the breech betwee failure and manipulation, and I never accepted either.

Another factor, I think, was my own personality. I am pretty easygoing, don't like conflict. I like for things to go along smoothly, without intrigues and deception. On the other hand, I can be very hard when it comes to something I believe in strongly, and I did believe in the program we started. We had some real headknocking during those four years, and I didn't always lose. Looking back on it, I wish I had been even tougher. Some of those people didn't understand anything but ruthlessness.

If I had it to do over again, decisions would be a key. I wasn't strong on making decisions, particularly ones which played a political role. They kept pressing me, these different factions, for my decisions on appointments. I put them off, stalled for time. I needed to know more than I did, more than I could find out in a day or two. Every few days, someone would come to me and ask if I had made the appointment. Now I would simply tell them to go away and leave me along until I had made up my mind. Also, in retrospect, I should have been firmer on the decisions I made. I wanted to be flexible, but the opposition saw this as a sign of weakness. Frankly, I was up against impossible odds and didn't know it.

By my third year there, I, of course, saw the handwriting on the wall. I was, by then, committed to getting as much of the program in as possible, and I didn't care any more about staying on. I had taken a beating, and all I wanted to do was get out with my shirt on. I considered the situation and decided to go all out to salvage what I could; we put in an off-campus office for our program and got completely away from the Department. When we answered

the phone, we even said, "New School." That worked, because then we weren't associated with the old structure. We did our work there and managed to achieve some degree of success in working with schools and prospective teachers.

Another success was a thing with the students where we completely circumvented the structure. A small group of students came to me and wanted to put in a lab. We just did it without going through the faculty or the Dean. The program had been operating for nearly a year before anybody bothered about it, and by then, the students had already been given credit, so they let it stand. This kind of thing had to be done, even though I didn't particularly like the methods. It was necessary because of the top-heavy and archaic superstructure of the local and state administration of higher education. Here is an example of the situation: For a professor to change the name of his course, he had to submit his request first to the department chairman, me, and then the request had to go through nineteen steps before it could be approved and implemented. Nineteen! The request went through four or five committees, some of them more than once, all the way through the College administration and to the state capitol and back down the line to the department. By the time the thing was approved, the course had run for another year, or two or three, on the old title, and the professor might not even be there any longer. I think this is indicative of the structural weakness that kept us from adopting a CBTE program.

I might still have gotten the program installed if I had had support from the President. He committed himself to supporting me at the beginning, but when the crunches came, he couldn't be depended upon to follow through.

I realize that Elmstown is a unique institution. In fact, part of the whole idea when going there was to "tailor" a teacher education program to suit the particular needs of the institution. So, when I consider what caused the

program to fail, I often wonder if we missed the mark, or failed to create a proper "fit," so to speak. The entire situation being considered, I don't think that was what went wrong. In addition to the things I have already stated as possible causes of the failure, I think the following factors were just as important:

1. Institutional climate: The school was old and complaisant, in spite of what the higher officials said about "change." Students did not meet national standards, and graduates found little competition in obtaining jobs.

2. Power structure and communication system: I did not know the actual power lines in the school. Perhaps many of them didn't either. Further, there was a complete, working system of information which was not written on any organizational chart. Those who maintained this system did not initiate nor did they support change.

3. Individuals within the institution: Few faculty members cared to support the innovation; those who were threatened resisted, and most of the others saw no personal advantage in making a committment. All in all, a negative influence prevailed.

4. My own role: From the beginning, I was cast in a role which hindered me. I was involuntarily allied in a partisan position rather than having an objective administrative position. I never got to really be myself and use my most effective characteristics; I was always putting out "brush fires," settling disputes and defending my position.

The last thing I want to say is that if I had it to do over, I might not go there at all. But, I would definitely go somewhere else with the same convictions I had then. I have never changed my feeling about the "ethics of change." I also believe it is worth the effort to produce change in education, regardless of the personal cost. Somebody has to do it. But, I don't think people involved in institutional change, adoption agents, as you call them, make nearly enough money to make up for what they go through.

Benton University: Rest in Peace

The following narrative is reconstructed from interviews with Drs. Harold Bradshaw and Fred Tull, internal adoption agents who worked for adoption of an integrated teacher education program at Benton from 1966 until 1970. (Ed.)

Bradshaw: When I came to Benton as Chairman of the Department of Education in 1966, there were 1,200 students enrolled in the school, and half of those were teacher education students. The University, at that time, was facing a crisis in its very existence. It was badly located--a poor section of the south with 80% black population; state and University officials resisted moves toward educating blacks; it was not on the receiving end of needed federal funds; the faculty was old and tired; and salaries were low.

The first obstacle to the development of a new program in teacher education was an elderly Academic Vice-President. He had been responsible for the dismissal of three University presidents, and was against teacher education in general. The President appointed this man as Dean of Arts and Sciences in order to open the way for change in the School of Education.

I brought in Fred Tull and three other strong young Ph.D.'s, and we began to remodel the School of Education through a team effort. In five years, that team wrote four million dollars worth of proposals for federal funding through the U. S. Office of Education.

We made a concerted effort to establish communications with the faculty, and we had the power to reorganize the staff of the School. When I arrived, the faculty had ten members. I increased that number to fourteen, and by the fall of 1968, there were 27, more than half of whom were new people brought in by me.

We used group dynamics and confrontation techniques to pull the faculty into what we conceptualized as a "family group."

Tull: We began by taking the "Problem-Solving" approach. Each of the four new people headed up a division, and each had special skills in the team effort. Harold was the source of impetus for our work; he had come in strong and had the charisma to get it started, but then we had to pick up the ball at special times when our strengths could be brought to bear on the program. Harold had always thought of me as the mechanic, or engineer, for keeping the program running after the novelty has worn off. Different ones of us moved into leadership as the program went through its developmental stages. The group dynamics approach had its merit as far as making the faculty feel like a team, and it brought great personal satisfaction to many of us, but it had its drawbacks, too. First, there was the feeling that group sensitivity and confrontation was a great risk; some of the faculty simply could not get that close. Also, there was the problem of getting too involved with personalities to get the work of the program rolling.

But, in the last analysis, a group of people sitting around a table, eye to eye, with a group bond to reinforce their efforts, managed to brainstorm their way to a total committment to the program.

Bradshaw: We performed a complete task analysis of the positions of Teacher Aide, Tutor, Assistant Teacher and Associate Teacher. We sent faculty members all over the country to glean knowledge and strategies for improvement. In a three-year period, we called 150 consultants to our own campus to conduct workshops. By 1969, we had completed development of modules for Associate Teachers and Tutors.

Tull: The irony is that, despite all our efforts and all our progress, the program is now dead and the entire institution threatened. There are now only 500 students in the entire University; federal funds have dried up; the School is caught in a racial/political vise; and it looks as if those years were all for nothing. Nevertheless, we learned a lot there, and now we know how to do it--give us a reasonable situation, and we will succeed on the next go-round.

Bradshaw: The reasons for the failure are not what I would consider the usual ones. In fact, the program was developed and operational and apparently destined to succeed. But, adoption implies more than just development; it also means continuity and renewal in the sense of ongoing work.

I had aligned with and supported the President. When the State University Board fired the President over racial conflicts, I resigned, along with 37 faculty members out of 82. Federal funds ended, and in the end, the program was scrapped because the faculty had to fall back on conventional courses after severe funding problems.

The experience taught us an important truth about adoption of innovation. Even the best programs and the best efforts can be thwarted by external forces, and outdated methods become the only secure approach due to withdrawn resources. What happened? We had teamwork, drive and strategic success. We could handle administrative details, actual workaday tasks and a substantive concept of the program. We had people who could and did deal with each area of effort. We had a family group feeling about our innovation; we had the opportunity to create a first-class teacher education program, competency-based.

We had a rough choice to make. We could align with the President and hope he made it. If he did, we could keep our jobs and keep our program. If he lost,

we lost everything. Our other choice was to refuse to support the President, in which case we risked losing our jobs, but could hope for continuation of the program, since he supported it. We supported him; he lost, and we lost our jobs and the program as well. We chose thusly because we had no desire to keep our jobs if the program was lost. We still believe we made the right choice, and, as Fred said, we can use what we know to try again. The only problem is that there are often forces over which we have no control which can torpedo a program, no matter how good it is.

I think teacher education and higher education in general is just about finished as we know it. It has not been accountable in the past, and it is too late to change, considering the incredible complexity of innovation in any institution. I think education in the U. S. will undergo drastic changes in the near future, with emphasis shifting from academic to vocational areas. I think such changes could be beneficial provided the academic disciplines are not dried up altogether; teacher training, good teacher training, is crucial no matter what the subject content, and I'm afraid teacher education is on the way down.

Synthesis

Based on case studies such as these, it is possible to draw some general inferences about the role of adoption agents, as well as to discover the importance of organizational variables in the adoption of innovations.

Role of the Adoption Agent. Studies have found that the presence of an adoption agent is the most crucial factor in the successful adoption of an innovation in an educational setting (Richburg, 1970). Demonstration and planned dissemination speed up the diffusion process (Hughes and Achilles, 1971). One study even states that outside assistance seems to be the key factor in determining adoption of innovations by administrators (Kerins, et al., 1971).

Several studies stress the importance of a cooperative relationship between the agent and members of the client system (Hall, 1971; Harrison, 1970; Smith, 1970). These interviews offer some insights into this relationship. In "The Neal Tapes," the adoption agent's role included being an information source and specialist, an adoption catalyst, and, finally, merely an encouraging support. The agent's interpersonal skills were evident throughout the adoption process. Finally, he knew when to step out and let the members of the institution take over. In "Bill Stone's Memory," the adoption agent suggests that the personality of the adoption agent and the role of the agent in the institution may be important factors in the success or failure of an innovation. Finally, at Benton University, it seems that the position of the agent with respect to the political situation of the institution and community may be of critical significance in determining the success of an innovation, even when other considerations are favorable to adoption. For further analysis of adoption agent skills, see Wallace, R. C. Each his own man: The role of

adoption agents in the implementation of personalized teacher education, from the Research and Development Center for Teacher Education, the University of Texas at Austin (1974).

Organizational Variables: Several organizational characteristics, as they affect the adoption of innovations, have been mentioned in these case studies. At Central State, the adoption agent has indicated the importance of personalities and leadership styles of key faculty and administrators involved in the adoption process. At Elmstown College, the agent has emphasized the importance of the organizational climate, the characteristics of the students, faculty and administrators, the power structure and communication systems, and the relationship of the department to the college administration. At Benton University, the adoption agent has emphasized the importance of funding, as well as the community and political situation in which the university is located.

Although much has been written on characteristics of adopting institutions and the importance of these characteristics, systematic categorizations of organizational variables as they affect the adoption process have not been found in the literature (Manning, 1973). Distinguishing innovative institutions from non-innovative institutions depends on institutional variables such as communication sources, environmental conditions, organizational structures, and characteristics of persons involved in the change process (Rogers and Shoemaker, 1971). Since these organizational variables, in part, determine the strategy which the change agent uses, as well as the role of the change agent in the change process, it is essential that the adoption agent be able to diagnose institutional characteristics before committing himself, time and resources to a particular institution.

In order to collect and organize information on organizational characteristics which affect the adoption process, a prototype measure, the Trouble-Shooting Checklist (TSC), has been developed. For more information about diagnosing organizational variables, see Manning, B. A. The "Trouble-Shooting" Checklist: A manual to aid educational change agents in the prediction of organizational change potential, from the Research and Development Center for Teacher Education, the University of Texas at Austin (1973).

Phases and Adoption Strategies: In each case story, the implementation of the innovation took several years. One assumption underlying the CBAM is that adopting innovations does take several years. Five to eight years is not all that uncommon. Within this period of relative disequilibrium, key phases can be identified and, depending on the situation, different adoption strategies can be employed to "game plan" the change.

In "The Neal Tapes," a typical time flow is documented from first having heard about an innovation, through examining it, to trying it out on an experimental basis. In this case, the faculty were using outside consultants, along with a boot-straps approach to change. Bill Stone was attempting to lead the charge toward change as a knight in shining armour. Unfortunately, his underestimate of the potential difficulties led to a partial fizzle. At Benton University, an experimental team was established and did most of the innovation work. As happens all too often, when the team disbanded, use of the innovation was lost.

For information about phases and adoption strategies, see Hall, G. E. Phases in the adoption of educational innovations in teacher training institutions, from the Research and Development Center for Teacher Education, the University of Texas at Austin (1974).

Conclusion

The adoption process, whether "a tale full of sound and fury, signifying nothing," or a "sweete and gentil recollection, nectar to the soule," is always a story. The prospective adoption agent will find that he is dealing with characters, plot, conflict, and suspense when he participates in institutional innovation. He cannot obtain an "omnicient" perspective on his story; he is trapped inside his subjective observation. But, he can observe the other characters, interpret incidents and attempt to influence the line of action. Such an understanding of the adoption process could give him a more creative approach to situations as they unfold. He may not know the ending of the study, but he, at least, has the opportunity to apply his skills in a deliberate attempt to give his story a happy ending.

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